

Facts & Figures...

Each year, in the U.S., 15,000 lives could be saved if everyone wore seat belts. At 30 miles per hour, an unrestrained passenger weighing 150 pounds exerts the force of more than two tons as they crash against another object. This is enough to kill!



Only 61 percent of Americans always use their seat belts when they're driving in their car. Another 30 percent sometimes use the belts and nine percent never do.

A Traffic Safety Message
From the
City of Springfield
Public Works Department



For more information:
417-864-1980
<http://traffic.springfieldmogov.org>

Why Use Driving Restraints?



*City of Springfield
Department of Public Works
Traffic Engineering Division*

Myths About Seat Belts...

1. **I don't need a seat belt when driving at slow speeds or on short trips.**

All driving is dangerous. Fatalities have been recorded as slow as 12 miles per hour on non-belted occupants. Most crashes occur at speeds less than 40 miles per hour. Of all crashes, 75 percent occur within 25 miles from home.

2. **Seat belts are uncomfortable and too confining.**

Seat belts are designed to allow motion around the vehicle. They provide plenty of freedom without compromising safety. They are designed to activate immediately should a car come to a sudden halt. After regular use, seatbelts are very comfortable.

3. **If I wear a seat belt, I might get trapped in a burning car or caught in one underwater.**

Less than one out of 200 traffic related incidents involve fire or water submersion. Even so, you're much more likely to be knocked out and rendered unconscious if you're not wearing a belt. Your chances of escape are better when wearing a seat belt.

4. **My chances of surviving a serious car crash if I'm thrown clear of a car in a collision.**

You are 25 times more likely to be killed in a crash when thrown from a vehicle. The force of an impact can throw you 150 feet...15 car lengths! Seat belts also prevent you from smashing your head into the windshield, which could cause spinal damage.

5. **If I see a collision about to happen, I'll brace myself.**

Crashes happen in the blink of an eye. It is impossible to prepare for crashes, and the forces generated are enormous.

6. **I don't want to offend my passengers by telling them to buckle up.**

Most people willingly put on seat belts if someone only reminds them.

What About Airbags?

Airbags are passive restraint devices hidden in the steering wheel or dashboard of most cars manufactured today. A passive restraint device is one that operates automatically. In contrast, a seat belt is an active restraint device and must be connected to operate.

Airbags operate in the blink of an eye and do not obstruct driver visibility or reduce driver control. Several sensors are located in the bumper and front engine compartment of a vehicle. You cannot activate an airbag by beating the bumper with a sledge hammer. However, in a frontal crash, these sensors activate simultaneously. When activated, they expel a non-toxic nitrogen gas, which fills a nylon bag. It inflates like a balloon to provide a cushion to passengers propelled forward by the force of an impact.

A common misconception is that a person doesn't need to wear seat belts if they have an airbag. This is not true. Air bags work in conjunction with lap and shoulder belts for maximum safety. Airbags are designed for frontal crashes, and activate by the sudden impact of 12 miles per hour or more.

The nitrogen gas expelled is non-toxic and cannot cause harm. When the bag inflates, it can push a cigarette aside, but will not usually affect someone wearing eyeglasses. When deflated, a white powder will be seen. This is talc powder and non-toxic. Once an airbag has been activated, it cannot be used again and must be replaced. This will cost about \$350. Many insurance policies cover this expense.